

What They Do

Laboratory Support Workers, also known as Lab Glass Washers or Lab Glass Cleaners, wash and dry glass and plastic ware such as pipettes, petri dishes, and test tubes. They collect the dirty items from laboratory stations, and stock clean inventory where needed. They must keep the glass-washing facility clean and swept, according to standard guidelines. To make sure no unwanted organisms are introduced to elements within an experiment, these workers use an autoclave to sterilize glassware and other items. They also test cleaned glassware for sterility. They keep records of the equipment that is used and cleaned, generally on a computer database.

These workers may also receive samples to be assayed, prepare samples for study, maintain and repair equipment, perform instrument set up and calibration, maintain quality control, keep records, guide other lab workers, and ensure lab cleanliness.

Duties may include keeping inventory and ensuring that needed supplies are ordered. Since glassware is by nature fragile, breakage does occur. A Laboratory Support Worker performs routine upkeep of glass-washing equipment and is assigned other related duties as required.

*Laboratory Support Workers in the biotech industry share characteristics of Medical Equipment Preparers and Dishwashers. Detailed descriptions of these occupations may be found in the Occupational Information Network (O*NET) at online.onetcenter.org.*

Important skills, knowledge, and abilities include:

- ▶ Equipment Maintenance – Performing routine maintenance on equipment and determining when and what kind of maintenance is needed.
- ▶ Information Ordering – The ability to arrange things or actions in a certain order or pattern according to a specific rule or set of rules (e.g., patterns of numbers, letters, words, pictures, mathematical operations).
- ▶ Trunk Strength – The ability to use your abdominal and lower back muscles to support part of the body repeatedly or continuously over time without ‘giving out’ or fatiguing.
- ▶ Manual Dexterity – The ability to quickly move your hand, your hand together with your arm, or your two hands to grasp, manipulate, or assemble objects.
- ▶ Mechanical – Knowledge of machines and tools, including their designs, uses, repair, and maintenance.
- ▶ Problem Sensitivity – The ability to tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong. It does not involve solving the problem, only recognizing there is a problem.

Training/Requirements

- ▶ High school diploma or associate degree or equivalent.
- ▶ Up to two years of work experience preferred.

Laboratory Support Workers

Biotechnology Careers

What's the California Job Outlook?

While the Bureau of Labor Statistics does not collect data on Laboratory Support Workers, the occupations listed below are found in the biotechnology industry and have similar duties to Laboratory Support Workers. The California outlook and wage figures below are drawn from all industries and represent occupations comparable to Laboratory Support Workers.

Standard Occupational Classification	Estimated Number of Workers 2002	Estimated Number of Workers 2012	Average Annual Openings	2005 Wage Range (per hour)
Medical Equipment Preparers				
31-9093	2,900	3,600	120	\$11.34 to \$16.65
Dishwashers				
35-9021	59,700	67,600	2,800	\$7.29 to \$8.55

These figures do not include self-employment.

Average annual openings include new jobs plus openings due to separations.

Source: www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov, Employment Projections by Occupation and OES Employment & Wages by Occupation, Labor Market Information Division, Employment Development Department.

Additional Sources of Information

California Community Colleges Biotechnologies Initiative
(800) 344-3812
<http://www.cccbitech.org>

Occupational Information Network (O*NET)
<http://online.onetcenter.org>